

20/7/09  
Russell Stimson

Ms Claire Moore  
Chair  
Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

By E-mail: [community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au](mailto:community.affairs.sen@aph.gov.au)

Dear Senator Moore

**Re: Inquiry into Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) Bill 2009 and two related Bills**

I write to express my concern about the above bills. I understand that these bills will enable Medicare funding, access to the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme and professional indemnity premium support for midwives providing care for women to give birth in hospital.

Medicare funding for midwifery care is long overdue. It is not acceptable however to exclude homebirth from this funding and indemnity arrangement. By doing this Australia is totally out of step with nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, The Netherlands and New Zealand.

These nations support the rights of women to choose homebirth and fund a registered midwife through their national health scheme. In New Zealand and the U.K women have a legislative right to choose homebirth.

The intersection of this legislation with the national registration and accreditation of health professionals will prevent homebirth midwives from registering. I believe this to be an unintended consequence and ask that you take steps to include homebirth within the Health Legislation Amendment (Midwives and Nurse Practitioners) and related Bills.

I support a system where all consumers are treated equally, with the same access to funding and the same insurance protection.

As a father of four children all birthed at home, I find the proposed changes for family birthing choices an absolute disgrace. What government would legislate to remove this choice for my family and many other well educated and informed families?

We were able to choose an extremely well qualified midwife who attended all of our ante-natal visits, was present for the duration of labor and many hours afterwards and gave postnatal care that was second to none!!! The health and well-being of my wife and baby at all times was our midwives first and foremost priority. This choice MUST be available to all birthing families who wish to access it. Our beautiful children have all been given the best start in life any child could ask for. Gentle, drug free births, extended duration breastfeeding and no separation from the family unit. Isn't this what we should be ensuring stays available to all the families who wish to have this type of care?

Yours sincerely  
Russell Stimson (Father of 4 home birthed children)